

CAREER GUIDE POLICY ANALYST

SOC Code: 13-1199

Pay Band(s): 4,5,6 and 7 ([Salary Structure](#))

Standard Occupational Description: There is no standard occupational description for the occupation of Policy Analyst as used by the Commonwealth. This occupation would be included in the Business Operations Specialist, All Others. This group is comprised of many different types of business occupations with a wide range of characteristics.

Commonwealth of Virginia Description: Develops, implements, and interprets policies and procedures. Researches a wide range of subjects and topics related to the mission and business operations of the organization. May analyze the structure and operation of governments, as well as various political entities. May conduct research, surveys and analyze public documents. Provides advice on policies, procedures, and laws to ensure that operations meet state and federal requirements and interpretations are consistent.

Policy Analyst positions in the Commonwealth are assigned to the following Roles in the [Policy Analysis and Planning Career Group](#):

[Policy and Planning Specialist I](#)

[Policy and Planning Specialist II](#)

[Policy and Planning Specialist III](#)

[Policy and Planning Specialist IV](#)

While Policy Analysts within the Commonwealth are all located within the Policy Analysis and Planning Career Group, individuals may want to pursue other opportunities within the Commonwealth depending upon individual training, education, knowledge, skills, abilities, and interests.

Other Career Group(s) that may be of interest are:

[Financial Services](#)

[Audit and Management Services](#)

[Human Resources](#)

[Procurement](#)

[Program Administration](#)

SKILLS, KNOWLEDGE, ABILITIES AND TASKS

(Technical and Functional Expertise)

Skills

Note: The technical and functional skills listed below are based on general occupational qualifications for Policy Analysts commonly recognized by most employers. Typically, you will not be required to have all of the skills listed to be a successful performer. Recruitment and selection standards for an individual state job must be based on the specific knowledge, skills, and abilities for that job as indicated in the job announcement and job description in the Employee Work Profile.

1. Communicating effectively orally and in writing as appropriate for the needs of the audience.

2. Understanding written sentences and paragraphs in work related documents.
3. Using logic and reasoning to identify and analyze the strengths and weaknesses of alternative solutions, conclusions or approaches to problems.
4. Talking to others to convey information effectively.
5. Giving full attention to what other people are saying, taking time to understand the points being made, asking questions as appropriate, and not interrupting at inappropriate times.
6. Using mathematical methods and statistics to solve problems.
7. Understanding the implications of new information for both current and future problem solving and decision-making.
8. Being aware of others' reactions and understanding why they react as they do.
9. Identifying complex problems and reviewing related information to develop and evaluate options and implement solutions.
10. Determining how a system should work and how changes in conditions, operations, and the environment will affect outcomes.

Knowledge

Note: *The technical and functional knowledge statements listed below are based on general occupational qualifications for Policy Analysts commonly recognized by most employers. Typically, you will not be required to have all of the knowledge listed to be a successful performer. Recruitment and selection standards for an individual state job must be based on the specific knowledge, skills, and abilities for that job as indicated in the job announcement and job description in the Employee Work Profile.*

The Knowledge of:

1. Laws, legal codes, court procedures, precedents, government regulations, executive orders, agency rules, and the democratic political process.
2. Structure and content of the English language including the meaning and spelling of words, rules of composition, and grammar.
3. Data collection processes, data analysis, and research or survey methodology.
4. Applicable computer software and operating systems.

Abilities

Note: *The technical and functional abilities listed below are based on general occupational qualifications for Policy Analysts commonly recognized by most employers. Typically, you will not be required to have all of the abilities listed to be a successful performer. Recruitment and selection standards for an individual state job must be based on the specific knowledge, skills, and abilities for that job as indicated in the job announcement and job description in the Employee Work Profile.*

The Ability to:

1. Read, interpret and understand information and ideas presented in writing.
2. Listen to and understand information and ideas presented through spoken words and sentences.
3. Communicate information and ideas in speaking so others will understand.
4. Communicate information and ideas in writing so others will understand.
5. Apply general rules to specific problems to produce answers that make sense.
6. Combine pieces of information to form general rules or conclusions (includes finding a relationship among seemingly unrelated events).
7. Anticipate problems and issues.
8. Build consensus on policy among individuals with different viewpoints.
9. Tell when something is wrong or is likely to go wrong. It does not involve solving the problem, only recognizing there is a problem.
10. Analyze and interpret data and evaluate operational situations.

11. Work effectively with officials from federal, state, and local government.
12. Negotiate and resolve conflicts.
13. Use automated spreadsheet and database management applications.

Tasks

Note: The following is a list of sample tasks typically performed by Policy Analysts. Employees in this occupation will not necessarily perform all of the tasks listed.

Tasks

1. Analyzes and interprets results of studies, and prepares reports detailing findings, recommendations, or conclusions.
2. Researches and analyzes proposed legislation and regulations.
3. Interprets policies and laws.
4. Researches and drafts policy rulings on behalf of the organization.
5. Organizes and conducts surveys and, analyzes interprets results.
6. Recommends programs and policies to institutions and organizations.
7. Consults with government officials and staff, civic bodies, and research agencies.
8. Oversees the implementation of new or revised policies and procedures.
9. Leads diverse groups in developing policies & evaluating program options.
10. Conducts oral briefings that are concise and thorough.

INTERESTED?

Like people, occupations have traits or characteristics. These characteristics give important clues about the nature of the work and work environment, and give you an opportunity to match your own personal interests to a specific occupation. When you choose a job in an occupation that matches your own interests you have taken an important step in planning a successful and rewarding career.

The occupation of Policy Analyst has **Investigative** and **Artistic** characteristics as described below:

Investigative — Investigative occupations frequently involve working with ideas, and require an extensive amount of thinking. These occupations can involve searching for facts and figuring out problems mentally.

Artistic — Artistic occupations frequently involve working with forms, designs and patterns. They often require self-expression and the work can be done without following a clear set of rules.

LICENSURE, REGISTRATION, OR CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS

Generally this is not required for Policy Analyst positions in state government.

However, the governmental agency may prefer individuals with certifications in specific program areas such as in Health Care Claims Procedural Terminology or Human Resources (PHR/SHRM) or as a business analyst.

Criminal History Record and background investigations may be conducted.

EDUCATIONAL, TRAINING, AND LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

Policy analysts conduct or lead advanced, complex and usually difficult analyses and studies, often with statewide impact requested by executive staff and legislators. Individuals independently lead, review, analyze proposed agency and state legislation, policies, and regulations for different governmental programs. Facilitate groups, set methodology, conduct research, analyze and organize recommendations.

The Commonwealth's Policy Analysts may conduct research and provide policy and legal analysis for use by an agency's program staff and management in evaluating a variety of program and policy options, as well as coordinate an agency's program efficiency assessment efforts. This may require an understanding of specialized programs such as the environment, social services, health, agriculture, criminal justice and educational services.

The Commonwealth's Policy Analysts may also work for a centralized agency that provides administrative policies and policy guidance to other agencies statewide. This group includes the policy analyst that is responsible for analyzing human resources and budget policy issues and processes, assisting in formulating the executive budget and compensation plans, and conducting program evaluation.

The bachelor's degree provides a suitable background for some entry-level jobs for analysts. However an advanced degree in public administration, finance, political science, or related field; or comparable experience is preferred for many entry-level analysts.

A master's degree in political science, business administration, public administration or a closely related field, such as computer science, engineering, mathematics, human resources, financial management, information systems or management science improves job opportunities.

Several Virginia colleges and universities offer advanced educational programs in any of the above listed fields.

Listings of Virginia institutions offering these educational programs such as business administration and public administration may be found on the State Council of Higher Education's web site: <http://research.schev.edu/degreeinventory/>

COMMONWEALTH COMPETENCIES

Competencies are a set of identified behaviors, knowledge, skills, and abilities that directly and positively impact the success of employees and the organization. Competencies can be observed and measured. When consistently demonstrated, competencies make employees particularly effective in their work. Competencies help lay out a road map to career success. You can use the Commonwealth Competencies to help improve your individual performance by adopting behaviors that make high performing employees successful in their jobs. In this way, you can use the Commonwealth Competencies for your further professional development.

The Commonwealth Competencies are:

1. Technical and Functional Expertise

2. Understanding the Business
3. Achieving Results
4. Serving the Customer
5. Teamwork
6. Interpersonal and Communication Skills
7. Leadership and Personal Effectiveness

The above competencies may be applied to employees throughout the Commonwealth of Virginia. They can be rank-ordered by agencies and hiring managers to represent the needs of a specific job. The rank ordering will change depending upon the occupation, an organization's priorities, the actual job requirements, and the supervisor's preferences.

Career success is both about what you do (applying your technical knowledge, skills, and ability) and how you do it (the consistent behaviors you demonstrate and choose to use) while interacting and communicating with others. Hopefully, by studying the Commonwealth competencies, identifying your developmental opportunities, and working to refine your own competence, you can take charge of your career!

For additional information about the **Commonwealth Competencies** go to: http://jobs.state.va.us/cc_planningctr.htm. For the competencies, we first list the competencies and then define each. Finally, we list competency indicators; to describe what successful performance looks like.

COMMONWEALTH CAREER PATH

Career opportunities in the Commonwealth are not limited to moving “up” to the next highest role and pay band, changing positions, or to becoming a supervisor. That’s because most roles describe a broad group of occupationally related positions that perform a range of work that requires increased knowledge and skills. For that reason, Commonwealth roles describe the career paths within the same or higher-level role for the same or different Career Group. The broad salary range and the Commonwealth’s pay practices provide flexibility in recognizing career development and advancement. ([Salary Structure](#))

For example: **Policy Analyst**

PAY BAND	PRACTITIONER ROLES
4	Policy and Planning Specialist I
5	Policy and Planning Specialist II
6	Policy and Planning Specialist III
7	Policy and Planning Specialist

PAY BAND	MANAGER ROLES
5	Policy and Planning Manager I
6	Policy and Planning Manager II
7	Policy and Planning Manager III
8	Policy and Planning Manager IV

Sample Career Path

Policy and Planning Specialist I

The Policy and Planning Specialist I role provides career tracks for policy analysts performing responsibilities ranging from entry level analysis to advanced level complex statistical or management analysis.

Policy and Planning Specialist II

The Policy and Planning Specialist II role provides career tracks for policy analysts that perform journey level to advanced level research, analysis, and evaluation related to economics, policy, legislation, regulations, agency organization, planning, and central budgets.

Policy and Planning Specialist III

The Policy and Planning Specialist III role provides career tracks for the policy analysts and planners performing advanced level to expert level policy and planning analysis for multiple agencies. Employees are typically located in a central agency.

Policy and Planning Specialist IV

The Policy and Planning Specialist IV role provides career tracks for analysts and planners serving as experts and advisors for individuals at the highest level in the Commonwealth's government, such as the Governor, Cabinet Secretaries, Legislators, and Agency Directors. Employees guide the work of professional level staff involved in developing and recommending implementation of major statewide policy, programmatic, budgetary, regulatory, planning, performance, and fiscal initiatives.

Policy and Planning Manager I

The Policy and Planning Manager I role is for first-level management positions that manage the work of staff engaged in the analysis and publication of labor market data; the conduct of studies of agency organization and operations; and activities related to policy development, planning, and performance measurement. Project planning, management, and review are typical responsibilities for this role.

Policy and Planning Manager II

The Policy and Planning Manager II role provides career tracks for managers responsible for managing/directing an array of planning, performance measurement, evaluation, policy, economic forecasting, or research projects critical to the agency's mission. Employees may direct agency regulatory processes to ensure development and review in accordance with law. Employees represent the agency and act as liaison on complex policy, planning, performance, regulatory, and legislative matters.

Policy and Planning Manager III

The Policy and Planning Manager III role provides career tracks for managers that direct divisions involved in developing and recommending implementation of major policy, programmatic, budgetary, regulatory, planning, measurement, and fiscal initiatives with statewide impact. Employees advise the Governor, Cabinet Secretaries, agency head, and other state officials on policy options, the executive budget, and the development and implementation of legislation, plans, performance measures, and regulations.

Policy and Planning Manager IV

The Policy and Planning Manager IV role provides career tracks for executive-level managers that are responsible for advising the Governor in the prudent allocation of public resources and the development and implementation of statewide fiscal, legislative, programmatic, planning,

performance, and regulatory policies. Employees have statutory and executive responsibilities critical to the overall performance and financial welfare of the Commonwealth.

ADDITIONAL OCCUPATIONAL INFORMATION CAN BE FOUND AT:

O*NET (Occupational Information Network)

http://online.onetcenter.org/gen_search_page

Virginia Employment Commission

<http://www.alex.vec.state.va.us/>

Career One Stop

<http://www.careeronestop.org/>

Virginia Career Resource Network

<http://www.vacrn.net/>

American Political Science Association:

<http://www.apsanet.org>

National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration:

<http://www.naspaa.org>

National Association of Budget Officers

<http://www.nasbo.org/trainingProgram.php>